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Lvnda D. Eisenberg, AICP, Director

3430 Court House Drive

Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-313-2350 FAX 410-313-3467

August 7, 2023

Elizabeth Everhart Patuxent LLC 1330 New Hampshire Ave, NW, Ste 116 Washington, DC 20036

Sent via email to eeverhart@missionfirsthousing.org

RE: WP-22-088 Patuxent Commons

Dear Ms. Everhart:

This letter is to inform you that your request for alternative compliance to the Howard County Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for the subject project was reviewed.

On August 3, 2023 and pursuant to Section 16.116(d), the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, Director of the Department of Public Works and Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability considered and **approved** your request for alternative compliance with respect to **Section 16.116(a)(1)** of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to permanently impact wetland and the 25-foot wetland buffer for an apartment development. Please see the attached Final Decision Action Report for more information

If you have any questions, please contact Julia Sauer at (410) 313-2350 or email at jsauer@howardcountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Anthony Cataldo, AICP, Chief Division of Land Development

AC/js cc:

Research DLD - Julia Sauer GLW – Todd Reddan



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING 3430 Court House Drive

Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-313-2350

Lynda D. Eisenberg, AICP, Director

FAX 410-313-3467

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE FINAL DECISION ACTION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

RE:

WP-22-088

Request for an alternative compliance to Section 16.116(a)(1) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. *This portion of the original request was deferred under the prior February 2, 2023 DAR for this Alternative Compliance.

Applicant: Patuxent Owner LP Contact: Elizabeth Everhart

Pursuant to Section 16.116(d), the Director of the Department of Planning Zoning, Director of the Department of Public Works and the Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability considered and approved the applicants request for an alternative compliance with respect to Section 16.116(a)(1) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. The purpose is to permanently impact wetland and the 25-foot wetland buffer for an apartment development. The Directors deliberated the application in a meeting on August 3, 2023.

Each Department hereby determines that the applicant has demonstrated to its satisfaction that strict enforcement of the above-cited regulation would result in unreasonable hardship or practical difficulty. This determination is made with consideration of the alternative compliance application and the seven (7) items the applicant was required to address, pursuant to Section 16.104(a)(1) and Section 16.116(d):

1. Strict conformance with the requirements will deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other in similar areas.

The applicant, Mission First Housing, is proposing a Housing Commission Housing Development project for a 76unit apartment building for low-income housing and housing for the disabled. The property is triangular and has frontage on both Cedar Lane (minor arterial) and Freetown Road (major collector). Application of the zoning setbacks separates the eastern panhandle from the building envelope and constraints the developable area of the site. The wetland area is within the building envelope and on the south side of the parcel almost parallel to Freetown Road. Access from Freetown Road is proposed to be aligned directly opposite from the entrance to the Hickory Ridge Village Center, as prescribed by the Howard County Design Manual, and results in permanent impacts to the nontidal wetland and 25-foot nontidal wetland buffer.

An alternative design to relocate the access to Cedar Lane was evaluated that could potentially limit the impact to the wetland and wetland buffer disturbance; however, it resulted in conflict with other regulations and in a design that was infeasible for the programming needs. It was determined that Freetown Road has lower traffic volumes and traffic speeds, and a smaller cross-section that results in a safer driveway entrance concerning turning movements and sight distance and supports the Regulations for access to developments from the lower classification public road.

It was demonstrated through the alternative design that strict compliance with the requirements would result in a further reduction in developable area, significantly reducing the building footprint and parking area, and would deprive the applicant from reasonably developing the site with the intended use.

2. The uniqueness of the property or topographical conditions would result in practical difficulty, other than economic, or unreasonable hardship from strict adherence to the regulations.

The parcel is triangular, includes a panhandled, and bounded by two public roads. Applying the zoning setbacks to the parcel creates a limited building envelope that is further restricted by the existing wetland area in the middle of the site. Alternative analysis and discussions demonstrated that strict adherence to the Regulations would result in a diminished building area and created an unreasonable hardship.

3. The variance will not confer to the applicant a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants.

The relief request is the minimum necessary to construct the apartment building, access drive, parking lot, stormwater management and other required site improvements. On June 30, 2023, the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) approved and issued the required authorization to impact the wetland and its buffer and determined there is no other reasonable alternatives available within the subject area that can accommodate the proposed use at a scale that's feasible for its programming needs.

4. The modification is not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or injurious to other properties.

The approval of this alternative compliance is not detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, or injurious to other properties. The site development plan for this project (SDP-23-026) must comply with all stormwater management and drainage requirements to ensure proper techniques are applied to effectively protect surrounding properties from being impacted. Furthermore, to alleviate any downstream flooding, additional stormwater quality control practices are proposed above the mandatory Environmental Site Design (ESD) that reduces the final rate of discharge form the site for the 100-year storm, such that is does not exceed current conditions draining to the Brass Knob stream.

5. Any area of disturbance is returned to its natural condition to the greatest extent possible.

The grading, removal of vegetative cover and limits of construction is the minimum needed to reasonably develop the site for the intended use. The site design proposes to minimize disturbances to the wetland and wetland buffer by using a private road that crosses the wetland area at its narrowest point. The site design also uses structured parking located underneath and within the building footprint to minimize overall site disturbance and to satisfy onsite parking needs. A pipe or drainage swale is proposed to convey water to the wetland area on the east side of the wetland crossing so that the wetland area can be sustained. Any temporary impacts to the wetland and buffer will be returned to its natural condition to the greatest extent possible.

- 6. Mitigation is provided to minimize adverse impacts to water quality and fish, wildlife, and vegetative habitat. The development proposes to use ESD practices, including bioretention facilities, pervious paving and Filterra devices for water quality control and to convey water to the wetland area for continued sustainability. Off-site planting between the existing off-site riparian system and on-site forest conservation planting/retention areas will be provided to create a permanent cohesive forested habitat. As part of the MDE approval, the applicant is required to provide wetland mitigation, which was satisfied through the purchase of nontidal wetland credits from the Patuxent Mitigation Bank. The proposed impacts are located within the approved Primary Service Area of the Patuxent Mitigation Bank and will offset functions lost due to the wetland impacts.
- 7. Grading, removal of vegetative cover and trees, or construction shall only be the minimum necessary to afford relief and to the extent required to accommodate the necessary improvements.

The grading, removal of vegetative cover and trees, and construction of paved areas and new structures is the minimum necessary to afford relief and is the minimum extend required to accommodate the necessary improvements. The applicant has used the least damaging design including the use of a private road that crosses the wetland area at its most narrow section in order to limit the area of wetland disturbance and impervious surfaces associated with stormwater runoff. In addition, site disturbances are further limited by using structured parking underneath and within the footprint of the building to minimize site disturbance an satisfy onsite parking. The design also provides environmental remediation, including, to the maximum extent practicable, the planting of areas where grading or removal of vegetative cover or trees has taken place.

Directors Action: Approval of alternative compliance of Section 16.116(a)(1) is subject to the following conditions:

- 1. The permanent impact to the wetland and 25-foot wetland buffer shall be limited to the grading required to construct the access driveway, parking lot, residential building and stormwater outfall as shown on the site development plan, SDP-23-026.
- 2. The area of the wetland and 25-foot wetland buffer outside the limit of disturbance must be planted and/or maintained within a forest conservation easement as shown on SDP-23-026.
- 3. All disturbances that are beyond the limits of the permanent disturbances must be returned to their natural conditions and revegetated after the proposed improvements.
- 4. Construction shall be in accordance with the Maryland Department of the Environment permit approval (Permit No. 22-NT-3282/202261946).

DocuSigned by: da Eisenberg

Lynda Eisenberg, Director Department of Planning and Zoning

DocuSigned by: Jarence Nickerson

Clarence Dickerson, Acting Director Department of Public Works

-DocuSigned by: Tinothy Lattiner

Timothy Lattimer, Administrator Office of Community Sustainability

cc: Research OCS DPW HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING



Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-313-2350 Voice/Relay

Amy Gowan, Director

3430 Court House Drive

FAX 410-313-3467

February 21, 2023

Elizabeth Everhart Patuxent LLC 1330 New Hampshire Ave, NW, Ste 116 Washington, DC 20036

Sent via email to eeverhart@missionfirsthousing.org

RE: WP-22-088 Patuxent Commons

Dear Ms. Everhart:

This letter is to inform you that your request for alternative compliance to the Howard County Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for the subject project was reviewed.

On February 2, 2023 and pursuant to Section 16.116(d), the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, Director of the Department of Public Works and Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability considered and **approved** your request for alternative compliance with respect to **Section 16.116(b)(1)** of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to allow grading and removal of vegetative cover and trees within steep slopes. In addition, the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, Director of the Department of Public Works and Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability considered and **deferred** your request for alternative compliance with respect to **Section 16.116(a)(1)** of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to allow grading and removal of vegetative cover and trees, paving and new structures within the wetland and wetland buffer. Please see the attached Final Decision Action Report for more information.

On February 2, 2023 and pursuant to Section 16.1216, the Director of the Department of Planning and Zoning, Director of the Recreation and Parks and Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability considered and **approved** your request for a variance with respect to **Sections 16.1205(a)(3) and 16.1209(b)(2)** of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to remove six specimen trees and provide less than 75% of the forest conservation obligation on-site. Please see the attached Final Decision Action Report for more information.

If you have any questions, please contact Julia Sauer at (410) 313-2350 or email at jsauer@howardcountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Anthony Cataldo, AICP, Chief Division of Land Development

AC/js cc:

Research DLD - Julia Sauer Marian Honeczy- DNR GLW – Todd Reddan



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ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE FINAL DECISION ACTION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY

RE: WP-22-088 Patuxent Commons Request for an alternative compliance to Sections 16.116(a)(1) and 16.116(b)(1) of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and Sections 16.1205(a)(3) and 16.1209(b)(2) of the County Code.

Applicant: Patuxent LLC c/o Elizabeth Everhart

Pursuant to Section 16.116(d), the Director of the Department of Planning Zoning, Director of the Department of Public Works, and the Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability considered and **deferred** the applicants request for an alternative compliance with respect to **Section 16.116(a)(1)** of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. The purpose is to allow grading, removal of vegetative cover and trees, paving and new structures within the wetland and wetland buffer. The Directors deliberated the application in a meeting on February 2, 2023 and determined to defer action on this request until the State acts on the Joint Federal/State Application to permit the wetland and wetland buffer.

Pursuant to Section 16.116(d), the Director of the Department of Planning Zoning, Director of the Department of Public Works, and the Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability considered and **approved** the applicants request for an alternative compliance with respect to **Section 16.116(b)(1)** of the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. The purpose is to allow grading and removal of vegetative cover and trees within steep slopes. The Directors deliberated the application in a meeting on February 2, 2023.

For alternative compliance to Section 16.116(b)(1) each Department hereby determines that the applicant has demonstrated to its satisfaction that strict enforcement of the above-cited regulation would result in unreasonable hardship or practical difficulty. This determination is made with consideration of the alternative compliance application and the seven (7) items the applicant was required to address, pursuant to Section 16.104(a)(1) and Section 16.116(d):

1. Strict conformance with the requirements will deprive the applicant of rights commonly enjoyed by other in similar areas.

According to Howard County aerial photography, the northwest corner of the property was improved with a home that was removed between 1998 and 2002. In 2011, a temporary stockpile of dirt was deposited in the previous home location. To minimize the area occupied by the stockpile, the dirt was graded in a manner that created vertical slopes that average 25 percent or greater over ten vertical feet. Although the stockpile of dirt was intended to be temporary, it has remained on the property since 2011 and is classified as man-made steep slopes. The applicant proposes to regrade a portion the steep slope area to create a stormwater management facility for the apartment development and place the eastern bank of stormwater management facility and remaining

undisturbed steep slopes in a planted forest conservation easement. Strict conformance with the requirements would deprive the applicant the ability to develop this portion of the property with stormwater management pond, which is a necessary requirement for reasonable development.

2. The uniqueness of the property or topographical conditions would result in practical difficulty, other than economic, or unreasonable hardship from strict adherence to the regulations.

The triangular property has frontage onto two public roads and includes a panhandle. Application of the zoning setbacks separates the panhandle from the building envelope and constraints the developable area of the site. Strict compliance with the regulations would prohibit regrading of the slopes to create a functional stormwater management facility and result in a practical difficulty in developing the site to meet stormwater management requirements.

- **3.** The variance will not confer to the applicant a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants. Approval of this request would not confer on the applicant a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants. The triangular nature of the site and the existing slopes, wetlands, and buffers significantly limit the developable are of this site. The grading of the steep slopes will provide adequate stormwater management that would be required for any type of development, with a portion that will be planted and placed in a permanent forest conservation easement.
- 4. The modification is not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or injurious to other properties. Approval of this request is not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, or injurious to other properties. The regrading of the steep slopes will remove the former temporary stockpile from the property and replace it with a stormwater management facility and planted forest conservation easement.
- 5. Any area of disturbance is returned to its natural condition to the greatest extent possible.

The disturbed area will be returned to its natural condition to the greatest extent possible. The steep slope area will be removed to create a stormwater management facility and forest conservation easement area.

- 6. Mitigation is provided to minimize adverse impacts to water quality and fish, wildlife, and vegetative habitat. The project will provide water quality stormwater management based on Environmental Site Design to the maximum extent practical by providing two micro-bioretention facilities and pervious paving. A portion of the regraded steep slope area will be planted and placed in a permanent forest conservation easement.
- 7. Grading, removal of vegetative cover and trees, or construction shall only be the minimum necessary to afford relief and to the extent required to accommodate the necessary improvements. The proposed grading, removal of vegetative cover and trees, or construction shown on the alternative compliance exhibit reflects the minimum necessary to afford relief and the minimum extent required to

compliance exhibit reflects the minimum necessary to afford relief and the minimum extent required to accommodate the improvements needed for reasonable development of the property. The design utilizes best practices for water quality enhancement, including the planting trees within a permanent forest conservation easement.

Directors Action: Approval of alternative compliance of Section 16.116(b)(1) is subject to the following conditions:

1. The disturbance to the steep slopes shall be limited to the grading as shown on the approved site development plan (SDP-23-026). Any natural vegetation disturbed during the grading for the stormwater management facility must be restored to its natural condition to the greatest extent possible, including the stabilization and revegetation of the remaining slopes, once construction is complete.

DocuSigned by:

Amy Gonan

Amy Gowan, Director Department of Planning and Zoning

DocuSigned by: John Seefried

John Seefried, Acting Director Department of Public Works

DocuSigned by: OCLUB.

Joshua Feldmark, Administrator Office of Community Sustainability

Pursuant to Section 16.1216, the Director of the Department of Planning Zoning, Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Administrator of the Office of Community Sustainability considered and **approved** the applicants request for a variance with respect to **Section 16.1205(a)(3) and 16.1209(b)(2)** of the Forest Conservation Regulations. The purpose is to remove six specimen trees and provide less than 75% of the forest conservation obligation on-site. The Directors deliberated the application in a meeting on February 2, 2023.

Each Department hereby determines that the applicant has demonstrated to its satisfaction that strict enforcement of the above-cited regulation would result in an unwarranted hardship. This determination is made with consideration of the alternative compliance application and the six (6) items the applicant was required to address, pursuant to Section 16.1216:

1. Describe the special conditions peculiar to the property which would cause the unwarranted hardship.

The property is triangular and includes an unforested panhandle to the east and an unforested former temporary stockpile area to the northwest. The remaining portion of the property is predominately forested. Application of the zoning setbacks separates the panhandle from the building envelope and constraints the developable area of the site to the forested area. The property has frontage on both Cedar Lane (minor arterial) and Freetown Road (major collector). The access from Freetown Road is proposed to be aligned directly opposite from the entrance to the Hickory Ridge Village Center, as prescribed by the Howard County Design Manual, and results in the removal of Specimen Trees # 5, 6, 7 and 20.

To potentially retain these trees, the Subdivision Review Committee requested that the applicant provide an alternative analysis to locate access to the site from Cedar Lane. The traffic analysis determined that access along the Cedar Lane site frontage would not have a clear line of sight given the anticipated queueing on Cedar Lane from the Cedar Lane/Owen Brown intersection, and highly recommended access be provided along Freetown Road for traffic safety purposes as Freetown Road has lower traffic volumes and traffic speeds, and a smaller cross-section. The Subdivision and Land Development Regulations also requires access to developments from the lower classification public road and supports access from Freetown Road. Specimen Trees #2 and 3 are centrally located within the developable area of the site, which makes it difficult to reasonably develop the site and locate an apartment building, parking area and access without directly impacting the tree's critical root zones.

The project proposes to retain forest within the wetland and wetland buffer and plant the panhandle and northwest corner. To create a credited planted forest easement, the easement must be at least 50 feet in width, which restricts a portion of the panhandle from being planted and results in a hardship to satisfy 75% of the forest conservation obligation onsite.

2. Describe how enforcement of the regulations would deprive the landowner of rights commonly enjoyed by others in similar areas.

The enforcement of the regulations would deprive the landowner of rights commonly enjoyed by others. The site has limited opportunity for access due to traffic safety concerns on Cedar Lane and the need to provide access opposite the existing entrance to the Hickory Ridge Village Center. The site access and zoning setbacks prescribe the buildable areas, utilities and stormwater management, and results in the impacts to the specimen trees. The enforcement of the regulations would significantly reduce the applicant's ability to develop and use a large portion of the property. The ability to access a site and reasonably develop a property are rights commonly enjoyed by others in similar areas.

3. Verify that the granting of a variance will not adversely affect water quality.

There is no evidence that granting of this variance will adversely affect water quality. The development is subject to the current Environmental Site Design criteria, which includes stormwater management to address water quality. Without the variance to remove certain trees, stormwater management requirements could not be met, which provide a greater overall benefit to water quality than individual trees. Stormwater management and soil erosion and sediment control measures will be implemented under the grading permit. The owner will replace the six trees with twelve native shade trees, and the onsite forest conservation obligation will adjoin the forested areas and forest conservation easements located on the adjacent property to create a larger protected environmental area.

4. Verify that the granting of a variance will not confer on the applicant a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants.

The granting of this variance will not confer on the applicant a special privilege that would be denied to other applicants. The site has limited opportunity to provide safe access and the location of the specimen trees and forested area on a triangular shaped lot creates a practical difficulty that precludes reasonable development of the site.

5. Verify that the variance request is not based on conditions or circumstances which are the result of actions by the applicant.

The conditions and circumstances for this request are not the result of actions by the applicant. The conditions are based on the naturally occurring environmental features onsite and triangular shape of the property.

6. Verify that the condition did not arise from a condition relating to land or building use, either permitted or nonconforming, on a neighboring property.

There is no evidence that the conditions arose from the conditions relating to land or building use, either permitted or nonconforming on a neighboring property.

Directors Action: Approval of alternative compliance of Sections 16.1205(a)(3) and 16.1209(b)(2) is subject to the following conditions:

1. The alternative compliance approval grants the applicant the authority to removal six specimen trees as shown on the alternative compliance exhibit (ST #2, 3, 5, 6, 7 & 20). The removal of any other specimen tree on the subject property is not permitted under this approval.

- 2. The removal of six specimen trees is permitted and requires the planting of 12 native shade trees on-site per Section 16.1216(d) of the Forest Conservation regulations. The trees shall be a minimum of 3" DBH and shall be shown on the site development plan landscape and forest conservation plan sheets. The trees must be bonded along with the developer's required landscaping or forest conservation.
- 3. The applicant must satisfy the remaining forest conservation reforestation obligation by purchasing credits from an established forest mitigation bank and/or fulfilling the obligation by planting or retaining existing forest at a suitable off-site location, preferably within high-priority locations, to be approved by the County during the site development plan stage.

DocuSigned by:

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Amy Gowan, Director Department of Planning and Zoning

DocuSigned by: Raul Delerme

Raul Delerme, Director Department of Recreation and Parks

DocuSigned by: Joshur Kelpmark

Joshua Feldmark, Administrator Office of Community Sustainability

cc: Research OCS, Joshua Feldmark DRP, Raul Delerme DPW, John Seefried, Art Shapiro



Howard County Maryland Department of Planning and Zoning 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043

DPZ Office Use only: File No. (j. p-27-088 Date Filed

(410) 313-2350

ALTERNATIVE COMPLIANCE APPLICATION

Site Description: Northeast corner of Cedar Lane and Freetown Road, Columbia, Maryland

Subdivision Name/Property Identification: Patuxent Commons				
	6333 Cedar Lane, 6367 Cedar Lane and 6441 Freetown Road, Columbia, MD 21044			
Existing Use: Under	elo ped	Proposed Use	Residential	
Tax Map: 35	Grid: 18	Parcel No: 108, 109 & 13	7 Election District: 6th	
Zoning District: PO	R (Planned Offic	e Research) Total site area	4.43 Acres	

Please list all previously submitted or currently active plans on file with the County (subdivision plans, Board of Appeals petitions, alternative compliance petitions, etc.). If no previous plans have been submitted, please provide a brief history of the site and related information to the request:

ECP-22-040

In the area below, the petitioner shall enumerate the specific numerical section(s) from the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations for which an alternative compliance is being requested and provide a brief summary of the request. Please use the additional page if needed.

Section Reference No.	Brief Summary of Request
16.116(a)(1)	Practical difficulties and unnecessary hardships result from the strict application of Section 16.116(a)(1). The Applicant is requesting an alternative compliance to permit the grading, removal of vegetation cover and trees, paving, and new structures within 25 feet of a wetland.
16.116(b)(1)	Practical difficulties and unnecessary hardships result from the strict application of Section 16.116(b)(1). The Applicant is requesting an alternative compliance to permit grading, removal of vegetation cover and trees, new structures, and paving on areas of the site containing existing steep slopes.

Section Reference No.	Brief Summary of Request
16.1205(a)(3)	Practical difficulties and unnecessary hardships result from strict application of Section 16.1205(a)(3). The Applicant is requesting an alternative compliance to permit the distrurbance and/or removal of 9 trees 30-inches in diameter or larger.
16.1209(b)(2)	Practical difficulties and unnecessary hardships result from the strict application of Section 16.1209(b)(2). The Applicant is requesting an alternative compliance to permit less than 75% of the required forest conservation obligation to be provided on-site with the remainder of the obligation to be provided off-site.

